



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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December 31, 2015

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Richard Sanchez *Richard Sanchez*
Chief Information Officer

REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT A SINGLE WEB INTERFACE TO BE A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR PERMIT APPLICATIONS (ITEM #42 – BOARD AGENDA OF AUGUST 4, 2015)

On August 4, 2015, your Board approved a joint Motion by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas and Supervisor Antonovich to:

- Direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) in coordination with the Assessor, Fire, Parks and Recreation (Parks), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Public Works (DPW), and Department of Regional Planning (DRP) to implement Gartner's improvement recommendations and direct departments to submit in writing implementation progress reports to the Board every 120 days; and
- Direct the CEO in coordination with the County's Chief Information Office (CIO) to conduct a study to design and implement a single web interface to be a one-stop-shop for the public to submit permit applications and report back to the Board in 90 days.

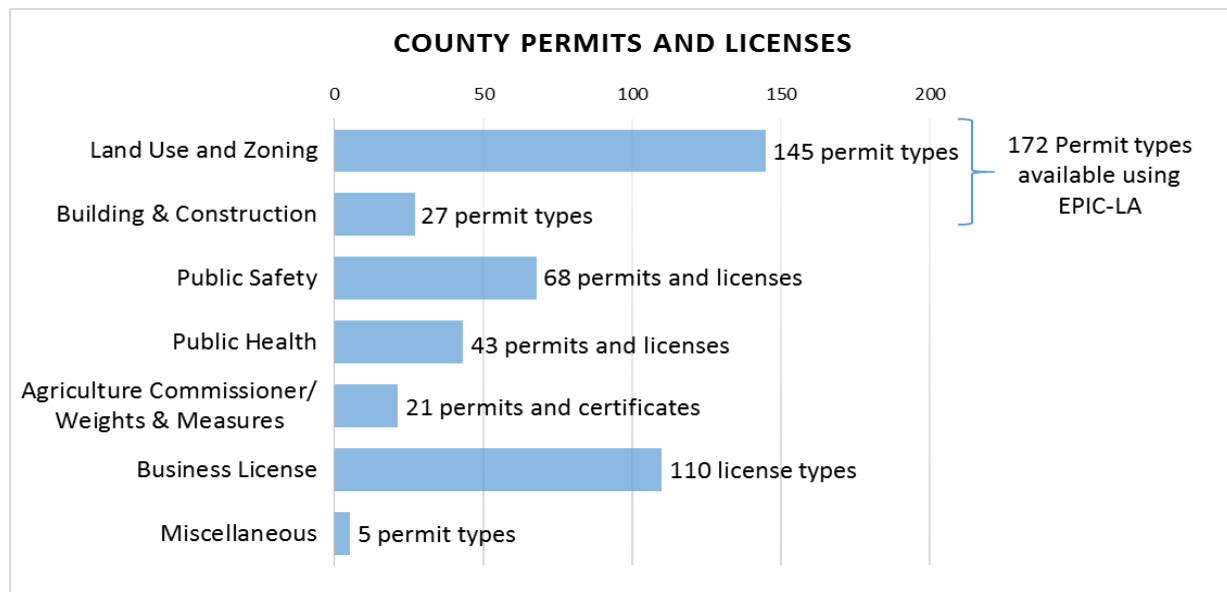
On December 3, 2015, DRP and DPW jointly submitted the first 120-day progress report on the implementation of Electronic Permitting and Inspections County of Los Angeles (EPIC-LA). This memorandum describes the findings and recommendations to implement a single web interface for the public to submit permit applications.

Overview of County Permits and Licenses

Based on a survey conducted by the CIO in November 2015, County departments issue 419 types of permits and licenses that can be grouped into the following categories:

- Land use and zoning permits – 145 types of permits required for different types of land use ranging from adult business permits to land use and development zoning permits. DRP is the lead agency responsible for administering 45 different Entitlement Permits with participation from DPW, Fire, Public Health and Parks, depending on the type of land use. DPW is responsible for 100 Infrastructure-related Construction Permits (e.g. flood control construction, encroachment, storm drains, street planning, and grading).
- Building and construction permits – 27 types of permits required for commercial and residential construction and remodeling, primarily administered by DPW.
- Public safety permits and licenses – 68 types of permits and licenses required for fire regulation and land use related to combustible/hazardous materials primarily administered by the Fire Department, with participation from DRP and DPW, depending on the nature of the project.
- Public health permits and licenses – 43 types of permits and licenses required for the operation of food and public health-related establishments administered by the DPH.
- Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures (ACWM) permits and certificates – 21 types of permits and certificates administered by ACWM.
- Business licenses – 110 business licenses administered by the Treasurer and Tax Collector, as required by Title 7 of the Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances.
- Miscellaneous permits and licenses – 5 types of permits and licenses, e.g. concealed weapons (Sheriff's Department), beach use (Department of Beaches and Harbors), and fictitious business name (Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk).

For the purposes of this report, the initial scope of permits and licenses includes land use and zoning permits, as well as building and construction permits.



Current Status of EPIC-LA

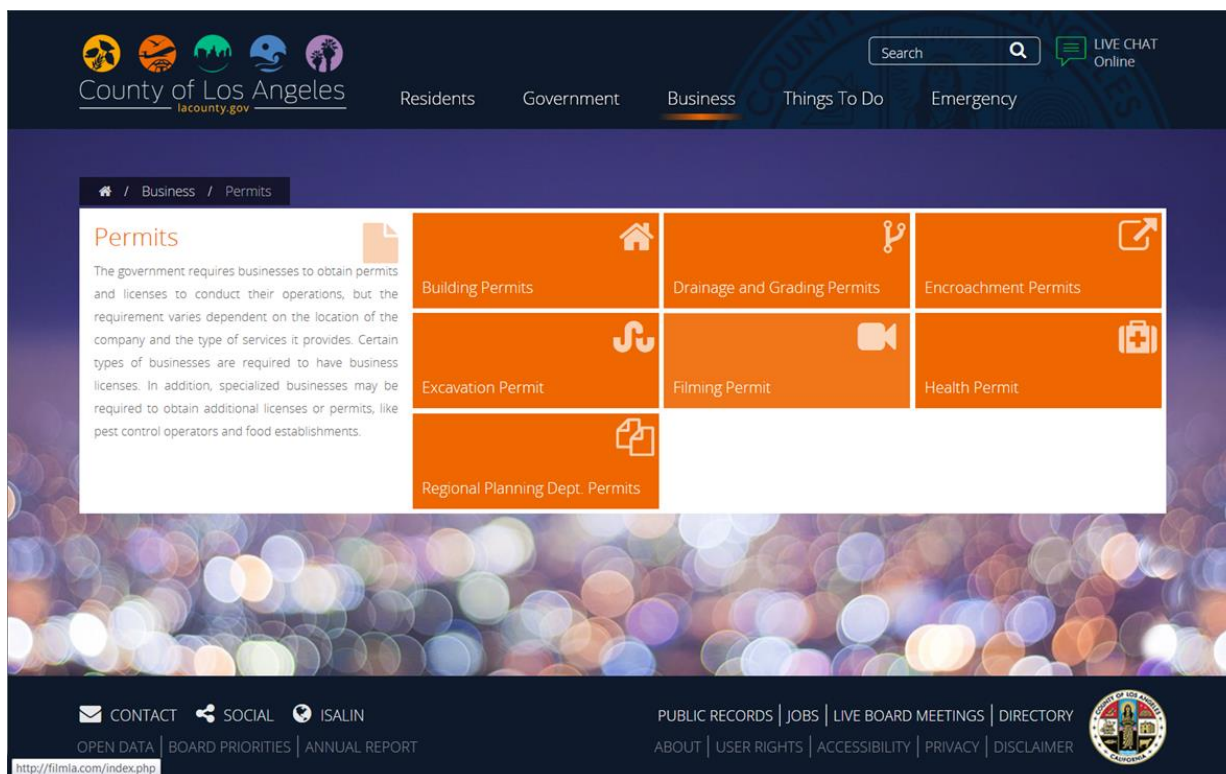
As described in the December 3, 2015 progress report, DRP has implemented EPIC-LA via a “soft launch” on November 30, 2015. The completion of Phase I of EPIC-LA in early 2016 will include a Permitting Web Portal that incorporates the processing of land development (Entitlement) permits administered by DRP.

With Board approval of Amendment 2 to the Agreement with Tyler Technologies on August 4th, 2015, DPW has embarked on their project to implement EPIC-LA for 125 permit and plan types for zoning, as well as building and construction permits, with a planned completion date in late 2017.

Three other departments besides DRP and DPW are also involved in land development, building and construction permits: Fire, DPH and Parks. Each of those departments currently has a limited number of software licenses for EPIC-LA. If a permit request that originates with DRP requires input from these other departments, they receive the permit information via EPIC-LA’s workflow capabilities. These departments perform any calculations or analysis outside of EPIC-LA, and submit their responses back to DRP and the other reviewing departments via EPIC-LA. This is an opportunity to expand the scope of EPIC-LA to provide additional functionality so that Fire, DPH and Parks & Recreation could potentially use it to perform more of their permit related work, including expanding the portal to add additional types of permits and licenses and/or to integrate with other permitting systems.

In January 2016, the Department of Regional Planning and CIO will convene an EPIC-LA Governance Committee comprised of stakeholder departments; Fire, Parks, and DPH to plan and facilitate the implementation of EPIC-LA Permitting Portal.

The updated County Portal also provides a permitting web page to help navigate to online information and services to various permits administered by DRP, DPW, DPH and FILMLA.



In developing this response we conducted research regarding best practices for local government permits portals and sought recommendations from the Center for Digital Government and from Gartner, Inc. We reviewed portals of other California counties and cities, as well as several States and leading cities. Sacramento and Santa Clara County, State of California, State of Hawaii, and New York City have well designed permits portal functions and features.

What we found is that there is a small yet significant difference between those sites and lacounty.gov as it relates to permits. The difference is that each of those sites attempts to provide an overview of the permits needed to start a business or for a resident to undertake a construction project. Our County Portal facilitates navigation by providing links to departmental sites.

We also met with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) to discuss their plans and potential alignment with this Motion. DCBA expressed a high degree of interest in participating in a permits portal effort, as it is highly aligned with the Small Business Concierge initiative.

Next Steps

Based on our findings and analysis, we developed the following recommendations:

1. Continue with the implementation of EPIC-LA as the County Portal for Land Development, Building and Construction Permits

EPIC-LA is the portal for Land Development (Entitlement) permits now that DRP went live in November 2015. DPW will expand EPIC-LA to include Zoning and Building & Construction permits, currently projected by the end of 2017.

2. Plan for additional EPIC-LA Permitting Portal Functionality

The EPIC-LA Governance Committee, comprised of five EPIC-LA stakeholder departments and the CIO, will convene in January 2016 to identify opportunities and specific next steps to expand the permitting portal functionality of EPIC-LA for Fire, DPH and Parks & Recreation. We recommend DCBA to be included in this effort, in order that the Small Business Concierge can learn the functions of the EPIC-LA Portal and utilize it to assist businesses with land development, building and construction matters.

3. CIO to work with DCBA to enhance the Permitting Functionality of their Department Portal

The CIO will work with DCBA to identify enhancements that can be made to their department portal regarding permit functionality. One enhancement is to ensure that there are clear links to EPIC-LA for land development, building and construction permits. Other enhancements include providing an overview of permits that may be needed for common scenarios, such as a home remodel or opening a new business. The nature of these enhancements will include providing a more complete overview of permit requirements to businesses and residents. The objective is to simplify and streamline the process of identifying and obtaining the appropriate permits they need.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Peter Loo at (213) 253-5627 or ploo@cio.lacounty.gov

RS:PKL:pa

c: Chief Executive Office
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors